

## Custody Hearing Report to Court

July 20, 2015

---

### **Case Summary**

Janet Morgan is a single, 30-year-old, Caucasian female. She has three biological children: Kerry Morgan, age 10; Layla Morgan, age 8; and Jessica Morgan, age 6. Kerry and Layla's father is Raymond Capa. Ms. Morgan and Mr. Capa were never married. It has been reported that Mr. Capa suffers from a mental illness and abuses alcohol and drugs. It has further been reported that he has been incarcerated numerous times and has also been in treatment for his substance abuse. According to Ms. Morgan, Mr. Capa has not been involved in his daughters' lives since 2008. Jessica's father is Justin Rogers. In 2013, Mr. Rogers was sentenced to prison for dealing drugs. He is scheduled for release in 4 years. Ms. Morgan and Mr. Rogers were never married. Mr. Rogers has not been involved in his daughter's life since his incarceration.

Ms. Morgan is estranged from her older sister and mother. Ms. Morgan denies a history of child abuse or domestic violence. She denies the use of drugs prior to a work accident that resulted in a back injury. Ms. Morgan receives disability and SNAP. She and the children are enrolled for Medicaid services. She also receives child support from Mr. Capa on occasion.

The Morgan family first came to the attention of the Department on April 2, 2015, for a report of child neglect. It was reported that Kerry, Layla, and Jessica Morgan attended school unkempt and hungry. The school recommended a developmental assessment for Layla 4 months prior to the date of the report, and Ms. Morgan had not followed through. Additionally, Layla suffers from a seizure disorder and was not taking her medication reliably. Ms. Morgan said she was using prescription medication to manage her back pain. The physical home environment was unsanitary and presented some environmental hazards, including exposed wiring. This report was substantiated for neglect, and Ms. Morgan agreed to voluntary in-home services. This intervention was largely successful, and the case was proceeding to closure at the time of a second report.

A second report was received in the evening of July 14, 2015. Law enforcement called the Department to request emergency response to the Morgan home. Two men were fighting in front of the home wielding knives and yelling. Kerry and Layla were in the front yard witnessing the altercation. Ms. Morgan was incoherent inside the home. Police found several bottles of oxycodone with prescription labels belonging to others and a small amount of a substance believed to be heroin. Ms. Morgan was arrested for possession of drug paraphernalia and child endangerment.

The Department substantiated physical neglect and took emergency custody of the three girls. Kerry, Layla, and Jessica Morgan were placed in foster care after determining the family friend specified in a previous safety plan was unable to provide care for the girls. On July 15, 2015, the Court signed an ex parte order and granted emergency custody of the Morgan girls to the Department. On July 16, 2015, the Department met with Ms. Morgan following her arraignment and release from jail. The Department met with Ms. Morgan on July 17, 2015, to develop an assessment plan. A permanency plan of reunification was established for all three children on July 17, 2015. The Department made contact with Mr. Rogers on July 17, 2015, in the Mock State Correctional Facility and informed him that his daughter, Jessica, was in the legal and physical custody of the Department.

**Reason(s) for Removal From Home:** The children were removed on an emergency basis to ensure their safety. Ms. Morgan was incoherent and observed to be under the influence of an unknown substance. She was arrested and taken into custody. She was unable to execute her parental responsibilities. Jessica's father, Justin Rogers, is currently in the Mock State Correctional Facility and unable to execute his parental responsibilities. Current location of Mr. Capa, father of Kerry and Layla Morgan, is

unknown. There is no adult available to provide care and supervision for the children.

**Children's Perception of Situation:** Kerry, Layla, and Jessica Morgan are sad at their removal and placement into foster care. They are aware of their mother's use of prescription medication for her back injury. Kerry is concerned about her mother and shared that things were going well with the in-home worker until about a month ago when her mother was having a lot of back pain, and Mr. Rogers' former friends started showing up at their home once again. Kerry made efforts to protect her sisters by taking them to a nearby park and obtaining food and temporary shelter with neighbors. All three girls recognize and verbalize that their mother needs help. Kerry, Layla, and Jessica Morgan want to be reunited with their mother.

### **Children's Information**

#### **Physical Health**

Kerry, Layla, and Jessica Morgan are all in good general health and up to date on their immunizations. All three girls were seen at Healthy Horizon Pediatric Health Care for their annual physicals during the in-home intervention. Kerry Morgan suffers from seasonal allergies and takes over-the-counter medication as needed. Layla Morgan was diagnosed with petit mal seizures. She was re-evaluated and placed on medication to control seizure activity with minimal drowsiness and other side effects. Layla Morgan completed a developmental assessment. She functions in the average range of intellectual functioning. Delays were identified in physical development, specifically gross motor skills and speech and language. Necessary developmental services have been arranged and are set to begin with the new school year. Jessica has no identified health care needs. All three girls were seen for dental exams on May 26, 2015. They received routine cleanings and fluoride treatments. All three children received fillings on June 3, 2015. Vision screenings were completed for all three children, and no issues were identified.

#### **Mental/Behavioral Health**

The children's mood and affect is congruent with their recent life events. Kerry Morgan routinely assumes a caretaker role with her younger siblings. Ongoing monitoring will be required to determine whether any intervention is needed. Layla Morgan presents as shy, withdrawn, and possibly hyper-vigilant. She is having the most difficult time adjusting to her situation. She frustrates easily and, on occasion, has acted out aggressively. She does not appear to have coping skills commensurate to her age. She also does not accept comforting from adults. Ongoing monitoring will be required to determine if a formal assessment is needed. Jessica Morgan seeks reassurance from her older sister. Kerry, however, does appear to accept comforting from her foster parents. There are not noted concerns with her ability to bond.

#### **Education**

Kerry Morgan is in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade at Jacksonville Elementary School. She is considered to be an average student with Bs and Cs. She has progressed through school and does not require/is not eligible for special education services. Layla Morgan is in the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade at Jacksonville Elementary School. She is a C student. She has been developmentally assessed and functions cognitively in the average range. She has identified delays in physical development, specifically gross motor skills and speech/language, which could be affecting her school performance. She receives occupational and speech and language therapy. Other identified services are in place for the beginning of the new school year. Jessica Morgan is in the 1<sup>st</sup> grade. She is an above average student. She does not require/is not eligible for special education services. The Morgan girls' foster care placement did not result in a change of school. The school was notified of their placement into foster care, and bus transportation has been modified to provide service from their foster care placement to the school.

#### **Social/Emotional Development**

Kerry and Jessica Morgan appear to be developmentally on target. Layla Morgan has identified developmental delays in communication and social and emotional development. The children's history of neglect appears to have affected their social interaction at school. While Kerry and Jessica Morgan have friends at school, Layla Morgan appears to have difficulty in her social relationships.

School personnel state they take measures so that she is not ostracized by peers.

## **Placement**

### **Relative as Placement Resource**

At this time, no relatives have been identified for possible placement for the Morgan children. The maternal grandmother and sister reside out of state. No paternal relatives have been identified for possible placement.

### **Description of Current Placement**

Placement Type and Description: Licensed family foster care home

Kerry, Layla, and Jessica Morgan are placed in the licensed family foster home of Keith and Paula Jackson. The placement provides the least restrictive placement option and is in close proximity as the home is within 3 miles of the Morgans' residence. The foster care placement is considered stable.

### **Needs of Foster Parents:**

The foster parents have been provided with known background information on Kerry, Layla, and Jessica Morgan. They have been provided with Medicaid cards to secure health care services for the children and with the name of their primary care provider. Foster parents will receive monthly foster care maintenance and will be reimbursed for transportation costs. Foster parents will receive ongoing regular contact with social worker for ongoing needs assessments and identified services.

## **Visitation**

Ms. Morgan visited with Kerry, Layla, and Jessica Morgan the day following her release from jail. The Department met with Ms. Morgan to establish a supervised visitation plan that includes visits twice weekly for 2 hours at the Department office. Mr. Rogers is incarcerated, and no visitation plan was established at this time. Whereabouts are unknown for Mr. Capa.

## **Safety and Risk Assessment**

Safety threats include:

- No adult in the home is performing basic parenting duties and responsibilities that assure child safety.
- One or both parents/caregivers will not/cannot control their behavior.
- One or both parents/caregivers lack parenting knowledge, skills, or motivation necessary to assure a child's safety.
- Living arrangements seriously endanger a child's physical health.

**Risk level: Very High**

## **Permanency Plan**

Reunification

Signatures		
Foster Care Worker:	<i>Brooke Tillman</i>	Date: 7/17/2015
Foster Care Supervisor Supervisor: Robin	<i>Robin White</i>	Date: 7/17/2015

